SUMMARY OF THE
QUALITY SYSTEMS COMMITTEE MEETING
DECEMBER 14, 2000

The Quality Systems Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on December 14, 2000, at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST). The meeting was led by its chair, Mr. Scott Siders of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to discuss progress on International Standards Organization (ISO) 17025 integration, the asbestos subcommittee, the microbiology subcommittee, revisions to Appendix D, section D.1, of the NELAC standard, the Performance-based Measurement System (PBMS) subcommittee, and the language concerning the continuing instrument calibration verification (CICV).*

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Siders called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

ISO 17025

Mr. Siders discussed the ISO 17025 issue. He asked that all committee members complete their homework assignments comparing ISO 17025, Guide 25, and Chapter 5 by December 20, if they have not already done so.

Asbestos Subcommittee

Mr. Siders reported that the subcommittee has talked to the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) about the goals of the subcommittee and how they differ from AIHA's existing programs. A teleconference of this subcommittee is scheduled for later in December. The subcommittee will have approximately 2½ months to develop an appendix.

Microbiology Subcommittee

The Microbiology subcommittee is scheduling several teleconferences after the start of the new year. Ms. Martha Casstevens, the chair of the subcommittee, reported that some progress has been made on wording changes based on the discussion at the Sixth NELAC Interim Meeting (NELAC 6i) and that work is continuing. She has received one comment on the microbiology section of the checklist, which will be referred to the On-site Assessment Committee that developed the checklist. Mr. Siders mentioned that he will e-mail Ms. Jeanne Hankins to discuss his concerns about not receiving any written comments and to ask what can be done to prevent receiving many comments at the last minute. He will also call Dr. Steven Billets to check on the status of the proposed teleconference schedule for January, February, and March, 2001.

Appendix D.1 Revisions

Mr. Charlie Hooper indicated that he has begun work on revisions of Appendix D.1 of the NELAC Standard and hopes to have a draft for the next teleconference. He discussed the approach of making judgement calls about incorporating comments and using redline and strike-out mode for the suggested changes.

After the subcommittee drafts proposed language, it will be sent to the whole committee for consideration.

PBMS Subcommittee

Mr. Siders informed the committee that he has now scheduled the first teleconferences for the subcommittee and one face-to-face meeting. The meeting is scheduled for January 11, 2001 so he plans to move the next Quality System committee teleconference, which was originally scheduled for January 11, to January 9. He has asked the subcommittee to read the PBMS straw model, ISO 17025, and Chapter 5, and to identify the top 3 or 4 areas in Chapter 5 that they see for incorporating more flexibility, consistent with PBMS. There are 8 subcommittee members, who will divide into smaller teams to work on specific issues.

CICV

Mr. Siders discussed the issue of the continuing instrument calibration verification, which is discussed in section 5.9.4.2.2.b of the NELAC Standard. Discussions between the state of California, Mr. Jack Hall, and Ms. Deb Loring have indicated that the current wording is unclear and is being interpreted in different ways by different groups. The question is how frequently the concentrations of the CICV will be varied. The June 1998 version of the NELAC Standard included more prescriptive language on this issue. Mr. Siders pointed out that the intent was to vary the concentrations used within a batch, but that it is acceptable to keep the concentrations used the same between batches. Some groups have interpreted the language to mean that the concentration may only need to be varied once a year. The committee discussed the intent of this section and the advantages of using different concentrations. Determining control limits for the different concentration levels was also discussed. Mr. Hall and Ms. Loring will submit proposed language to the committee to clarify this text. Mr. Ray Frederici will also develop clarifying language. One suggestion was to drop the second sentence of the section and to refer to the laboratories' standard operating procedures (SOPs) for more explanation. The accrediting authorities will be given an opportunity to review new proposed language on this issue.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of this committee is scheduled for January 9, 2001, at 1:00 p.m. EST.

Attachment A

ACTION ITEMS
QUALITY SYSTEMS COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 14, 2000

Item No.	Action Item	Date to be Completed
1	Finish homework assignments for ISO 17025 (committee)	December 20, 2000
2	E-mail Ms. Jeanne Hankins to discuss the lack of comments and what can be done to prevent receiving many comments at the last minute (Siders)	
3	Call Dr. Steven Billets to check on the teleconference schedule for January, February, and March (Siders)	
4	Compare the language in the current and the 1998 drafts for 5.9.4.2.2.b and propose clarifying language (Frederici)	Early January 2001
5	Allow the accrediting authorities an opportunity to review the proposed language for 5.9.4.2.2b, after it is developed	

Attachment B

PARTICIPANTS
QUALITY SYSTEMS COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 14, 2000

Name	Affiliation	Phone Numbers
Mr. Scott D. Siders Chair	IL Environmental Protection Agency	T: 217-785-5163 F: 217-524-0944 E: epa6113@epa.state.il.us
Ms. Martha Casstevens	Froehling and Robertson	T: 804-264-2701 F: 804-264-0782 E: mcasstevens@fandr.com
Dr. Peter De Lisle	Coastal Bioanalysts, Inc.	T: 804-694-8285 F: 804-695-1129 E: pdelisle@coastalbio.com
Mr. Raymond J. Frederici	Severn Trent Laboratories	T: 708-534-5200 F: 708-534-5211 E: rfrederici@stl-inc.com
Mr. Clifford R. Glowacki	Technikon, LLC	T: 916-929-8001 F: 916-929-8020 E: cglowacki@cerp-aiger.org
Mr. Charlie Hooper	USEPA	T: 706-355-8838 F: 706-355-8803 E: hooper.charles@epa.gov
Dr. George Kulasingam (absent)	CA Department of Health — ELAB	T: 510-540-2800 F: 510-849-5106 E: gkulasin@dhs.ca.gov
Mr. David Mendenhall	UT Department of Health	T: 801-584-8470 F: 801-584-8501 E: dmendenh@doh.state.ut.us
Mr. Jeff Nielsen (absent)	City of Tallahassee Water Quality Division	T: 850-891-1232 F: 850-891-1062 E: nielsenj@mail.ci.tlh.fl.us
Dr. Fred Siegelman (absent)	USEPA, OEI	T: 202-564-5173 F: 202-565-2441 E: siegelman.frederic@epamail.epa.gov
Ms. Cynthia A. Salmons (Contractor Support)	Research Triangle Institute	T: 919-541-6948 F: 919-541-7215 E: cas@rti.org